

For Immediate Release

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Tragedy on Hudson highlights need for increased safety and stricter standards

Washington, DC - This weekend's tragedy on the Hudson River highlights the need for improved oversight of the air-tour industry. According to the Department of Transportation, the air tour flights tend to be riskier than scheduled airline flights, yet receive fewer inspections and have less strict standards.

"The collision between the sightseeing helicopter and plane on the Hudson River is a tragedy, and the fact that a helicopter pilot described the accident as 'inevitable' is alarming," said Sires. "We must do more to prevent these types of terrible accidents and increase efforts to drastically improve safety."

While the Federal Aviation Administration has taken steps to improve the safety of the air-tour industry, several accidents have still occurred. The National Transportation Safety Board has repeatedly urged the FAA and tour operators to improve safety.

"We obviously have a problem with the safety of air tours. I contacted FAA as far back as 2007 after constituents raised safety and noise concerns with the amount of aviation traffic over the Hudson. I will continue to work on this issue with my colleagues to push for improved oversight of the air-tour industry," said Sires. "The FAA needs to step up efforts to control flights in this area, and Congress must increase oversight to ensure that FAA improves safety and protects the constituents of the 13th Congressional District."

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